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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. AMBASSADOR MORIARTY VISITS CYCLONE SIDR-AFFECTED AREA TO UNDERScore CONTINUED US SUPPORT TO THE REGION

DHAKA, JUNE 24 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty visited the Shoronkhola Upazila, Bagerhat District today, first visit to the Cyclone Sidr-affected area. There he observed several projects funded by the US Government to aid the ongoing rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. Ambassador Moriarty met with residents and local leaders of the area to discuss the U.S. Government's commitment towards rebuilding a more cyclone-resistant Bangladesh in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr. Ambassador Moriarty also announced a new US \$100,000 grant to Helen Keller International to ensure nutritional support for mothers and children in the Cyclone Sidr-affected area.

Ambassador Moriarty visited cyclone-affected families and observed their current living conditions. In a meeting with people who lost their homes during the cyclone, he explained how the United States plans to assist to help rebuild houses on their land. The U.S. Government, through USAID, is helping to reconstruct 825 houses in Shoronkhola. Each house will have a sanitary latrine, access to safe water and is designed to withstand winds of up to 150 km per hour.

Later, the Ambassador visited a road repair project, a U.S. Government initiative to provide employment to Sidr-affected people. He spoke to women beneficiaries and commended them for their initiative to fight poverty in the cyclone stricken area. The road repair project is part of a cash for work program where individuals working six hours per day receive \$2 a day. Approximately 42,000 Sidr-affected people benefit from this program. In addition to providing

income, the Cash for work projects provide important infrastructure improvements that will facilitate further economic benefits in the future.

Ambassador Moriarty also visited ongoing U.S. Government-funded development efforts in the Shoronkhola area implemented before the cyclone. He met with Shoronkhola religious leaders who received formal training on modern development practices through the U.S. Government's "Leaders of Influence" program. Ambassador Moriarty commended them for their contribution to society and underscored the importance of their involvement in national development efforts. He also visited a U.S. Government-funded Smiling Sun Clinic to see the range of health services offered to the community.

His visit ended with Rupantor's presentation of pot songs (folk songs) - a popular medium to reach out to the local people to raise awareness about important social issues. The United States Government has a long history of extending assistance to Bangladesh. The U.S. Government's assistance to Bangladesh includes support for free, fair and credible elections and more transparent and accountable governance; assistance for a better educated, healthier and more productive population; and funding to increase economic opportunities through equitable economic growth, and improved food security and disaster mitigation. Total US assistance to Bangladesh since 1971 exceeds \$5 billion.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)